STRATFORD,

AS CONNECTED WITH

SHAKESPEARE;

AND

THE BARD'S RURAL HAUNTS.

BY EDWIN LEES, F. L. S.,
Author of the "BOTANICAL LOOKER-OUT," &c.

"DAINTIES THAT ARE BRED IN A BOOK."

Stratford-upon-Avon:
PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY E. ADAMS.
1854.

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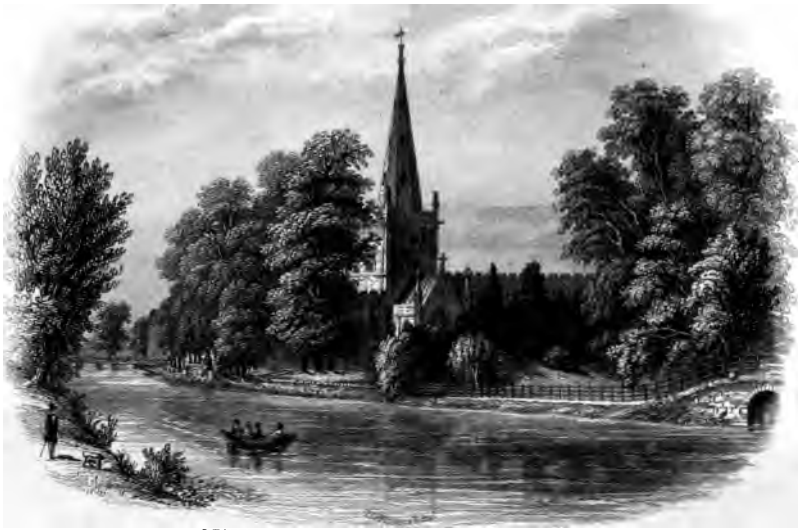

CHURCH OF THE HOLY TRINITY
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AND

THE HAUNTS OF SHAKESPEARE.

"Sweet Swan of Avon, what a sight it were
To see thee in our waters yet appear!"
RARE BEN JONSON.

BEAUTIFUL as is the situation of the town of Stratford, on the banks of the Warwickshire Avon, amidst Arcadian meadows, watered by a "soft-flowing" stream, there can be little doubt that its minute knowledge would be limited to those whose calm and happy fate it was to reside and dream away a peaceful life there;

"—— Methinks it were a happy life
To be no better than a homely swain;"

certainly its pretensions to celebrity would be small, but for the *magic of a name* that has penetrated into every region of the world where civilized man has trodden. SHAKESPEARE *was born in* STRATFORD; here was the choice of his retirement from the world in middle life; still instinctively, with the feeling common to our nature, "turning to the spot from whence at first he *flew*,"—literally in his case: here he died, and in Stratford church his honoured relics are entombed.

After knowing this, the minute labours of the topographer become of little worth; nor shall we enter a field interesting only to the mere groper after manorial or antiquarian lore. We shall not repeat here the chronicles of a Dugdale or a Wheler; for it matters little who held the site of the town "three centuries before the Norman Conquest;" or how a Saxon monastery came to be there, which was destroyed; and how the Bishops of Worcester became possessed of the place, and who followed them. These matters we leave for those whom they may concern; our business is to aid the pilgrim who may journey hither to the shrine of his idolatry, and trace Stratford principally in its connection with SHAKESPEARE.

The author of "Rambles by Rivers" has traced the ideas of a stranger in connection with Stratford so justly, that though the pride of a native may not be much flattered by the remark, we shall quote it and act upon it; since whatever interest Stratford possesses, is now entirely associated with and linked to the reputation of SHAKESPEARE; and happy are those who, like Washington Irving, while aiming to follow the footsteps of the "immortal bard," can add lustre to their own names in describing the local haunts of him who pictured all the phases of "many-coloured life."

"Stratford is a clean, quiet town, pleasantly situated on the right bank of the Avon: it is a place of no large size, without any manufactures, of little traffic. Its buildings are not very remarkable: one who knew nothing about it, might ride carelessly through it, without

a wish to stop his horse. Were he told that he was in Stratford—the birth-place, the chosen retreat, and the grave of *Shakespeare*, he would, however, look on all about him with very different sentiments. He would eagerly examine every spot connected with our great bard, or that existed when he dwelt here; especially would he desire to realize the *Stratford of Shakespeare*, to divest the place of all that has been added to it since he walked about its streets, and to reconstruct whatever has been destroyed."*

To do this satisfactorily would, however, require a considerable effort of that imagination that "bodies forth the form of things *unseen*;" for, as respects the town of Stratford itself, little indeed remains tangible that met the eye of Shakespeare in its integrity. The Church, the Guild Chapel, the stone bridge, part of Middle Row, an old house in High Street, above the Town Hall, on the opposite side of the way, bearing the date of 1596 on its front, and the memorable dwelling in which Shakespeare himself was born, are nearly all the relics of much importance left of the olden times of Stratford. Nor, indeed, is this to be wondered at, from the lapse of time and the continual changes taking place in renovating the fronts of old houses.†

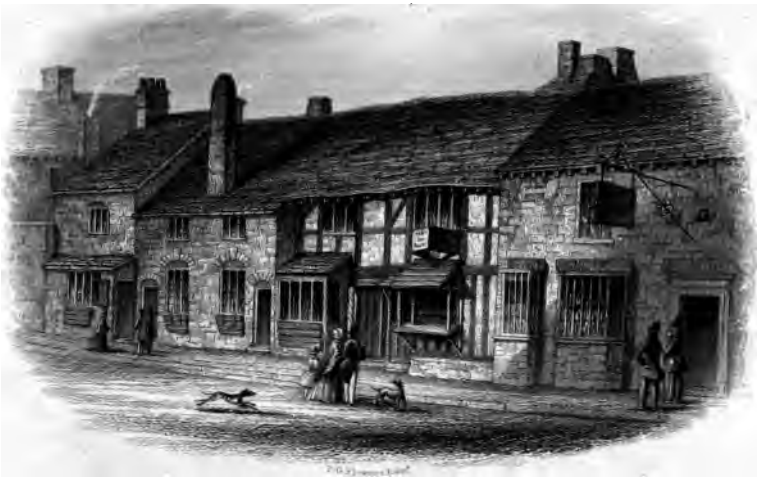
Stratford was an inconsiderable town in ancient

* Thorne's Rambles by Rivers—the Avon, p. 159.

† Here and there an old timber-framed tenement of curious ancient character may be seen on the outskirts of the town. The subject is analyzed at some length in Mr. Halliwell's folio Shakespeare, vol. 1.

times, having a *ford* over the river upon the great *street* or road, and so derived its name. Its importance was increased by Sir Hugh Clopton, a lord mayor of London, in the reign of Henry VII, and a native of Warwickshire, who built a substantial stone bridge over the Avon, still existing, and also a "great house" in the town, where doubtless in his time he was *the* great man! The town still progressing, a charter was granted to it by Edward VI, and the "bailiffs and burgesses of Stratford-upon-Avon" constituted. A grammar-school attached to the old guild was also provided for, which is interesting as connected with Shakespeare's education. Here, then, in a market town of about a thousand inhabitants, we find John Shakespeare settled in 1555.

But a country town at this time was but a rude assemblage of low timber houses, many of them thatched, and without upper stories—perhaps the lesser ones even without chimnies, and thus fires were perpetually happening; so, in the thirty-sixth and thirty-seventh years of Queen Elizabeth's reign two dreadful fires occurred at Stratford, consuming two hundred dwelling-houses; and in 1614—only two years before Shakespeare's death—another fire is said to have consumed fifty-four houses in less than two hours—probably many were thatched cottages, formed of very combustible materials. It is necessary to bear this in mind, when looking for vestiges of old Stratford, and also when gazing at the timber structure in Henley-street, where Shakespeare's father lived; for however inadequate it may appear *now* as the residence of a substantial family, it



SHAKSPEARE'S BIRTH PLACE

Published by E. Ackermann

was doubtless, in Queen Elizabeth's reign, a dwelling of note, when compared with the low wattled cottages that the lower order of people then inhabited.

Be it our first duty, then, to inspect

THE POET'S BIRTH-PLACE,

And so, proceeding from the cradle to the grave, we shall notice in succession the spots in and about Stratford interesting most especially by their association with his time-enduring name.

Tradition has long pointed out the timbered house on the north side of Henley-street as that in which John Shakespeare resided when his illustrious son was born, and this statement may be said to be all but absolutely proved by a deed dated 1596, discovered by Mr. Halliwell, *in which this identical house is mentioned as being in "the tenure and occupation of John Shakespeare."** We can therefore, as Mr. Halliwell says, "safely regard the humble dwelling now secured to the country by the praiseworthy efforts of committees formed at Stratford and London, as the earliest home of our great dramatic poet."† But this was not the copyhold tenement purchased by his father in 1556, which has never been shown to have been his residence. The Shakespeare

* A fac-simile of this interesting document is given in Mr. H.'s folio Shakespeare.

† Halliwell's Life of Shakespeare, 8vo., pp. 33, 34.

property in Henley-street, on which were situated the two houses purchased by John Shakespeare for £40 in 1575, is clearly the locality of Shakespeare's youth; and in the fine levied on that occasion, it is described as consisting of "two messuages, two gardens, and two orchards, with their appurtenances."

Shakespeare's father was what would be now called a respectable man: he had been a glover, and became a wool-dealer and farmer, married a woman with some little property, who was a nominal co-heiress of the Arden family;* and at one time was certainly a man of substance, for in 1565 he was an alderman, and high bailiff of Stratford in 1568. In one of these houses he probably lived till his death.

William Shakespeare was here born, it is said, on St. George's day, April 23, 1564, and it is certain was baptised on April 26th, according to the register-book of Stratford. The old font has been removed from the church, and is broken up, but a fragment yet remains in the possession of Mr. Heritage, builder. It may be doubtful, however, whether Shakespeare was actually christened at it, as domestic baptisms were common at that time. The poet was the eldest son of his parents, who had in all seven other children. So, as Mr. Knight remarks, in alluding to Shakespeare's early youth, "when he was five years old, that most precious gift to a loving boy was granted, a sister, who grew up

* Her maiden name was Mary Arden, the youngest daughter of Robert Arden of Wilmecote.

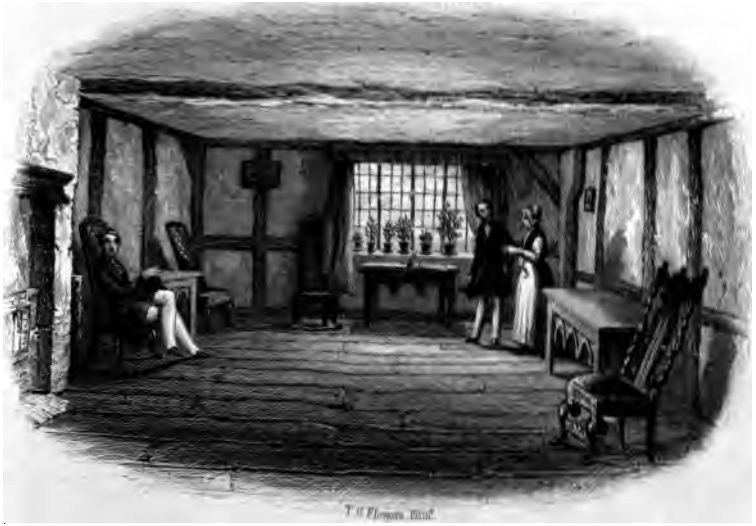
with him. When he was ten years old he had another brother to lead by the hand into the green meadows. Then came another sister, who faded untimely; and when he was grown into youthful strength, a boy of sixteen, another brother was born."

Shakespeare's father died in 1601, and the property in Henley-street then passed to the dramatist, whose sister, Joan Hart, resided in one of the houses until her death. The Hart family remained in possession until 1806, when William Shakespeare Hart sold the houses, &c., to Mr. Thomas Court, from whose family they have now been sold to the united committees of Stratford and London for the benefit of the nation at large. Its original features have been somewhat altered since purchased by the elder Shakespeare, and the two messuages have become three tenements, one of which was long a public house, known by the sign of the Swan and Maidenhead, and latterly faced with brick.

On catching sight of the low but honoured roof from whence came forth the man whose writings were for all time, the general impression certainly is that the dwelling is but an humble one. It must, however, be remembered that the house fell into hands continually becoming poorer, and thus its dimensions were curtailed. Besides this, the property was purchased by Shakespeare's father, and at this time but few houses in country towns exceeded one story in height. In fact, as may be seen from humbler ancient dwellings yet remaining in Stratford, there was usually only an apartment with attic windows above the ground floor.

Loftier houses only became general in the sixteenth century. Yet this house, lowly as it seems, is constructed with a ponderosity that will yet resist time's efforts for centuries.

Looking curiously yet reverentially at the old timbered house, with its open butcher's window (for one of the Hart family descended from Joan Shakespeare here carried on the trade of a butcher), we enter. The floor is paved with stones that, characteristically enough, are cut up into a host of splinters and fragments, as if really hacked by a butcher's cleaver. On one side is an ample fire-place, with cozy sitting places on either side; for in those smoky days, with penetrating draughts coming in on all sides, happy was he who was privileged to take the chimney corner. We proceed into the kitchen, lighted by a side window looking into the Swan yard. Here a most enormous beam—doubtless from an oak in the old forest of Arden—supports the mantel. The fire-place is ample enough to roast a sheep, with recesses as usual on either side for the gaffer and his dame, with a wide chimney gaping up to the sky, and ready to pour out a volcano of smoke, as doubtless it often has done, from a pile of crackling wood. If the fire is out now, our feelings sparkling back upon the past, must rekindle it. That Shakespeare himself has stood here before the cheerful blaze, no one can doubt. Perhaps as a boy he may have sat in the corner, feasting his galloping imagination from a spark in the ashes. His father at any rate lived and



THE ROOM

IN WHICH SHAKSPEARE WAS BORN

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died here, and he must have often walked in when in Stratford to see the old man.

From the kitchen, a flight of about a dozen stairs leads into *the chamber* that must be ever sacred, where the great bard first entered as an actor upon the seven ages of life. It is a low, moderate-sized room, nine paces by seven, with a window of four combined casements, and has a fire-place with an enormous beam supporting its mantel. We presume not here to dictate to the pilgrim—he must meditate for himself. But the room feels close as if the breath from a thousand whispers murmured against the old walls—"And Shakespeare was born here?" Here have thousands paid their willing homage: and look at the scribbled tapestry of the walls! it is the devotion paid at the shrine of genius, the inscription of the votary's mark that they yield to the potent spell: for if some presume to score a noteless name merely to deface the hallowed place with wishes vain as "airy nothing," we may trust the great majority write as devotees bound to the great master who has enthralled them, and only witnessing their own sensitiveness as subjects of an empire where he reigned supreme. But there is nothing left here now but the bare walls—no petty relics!—it is enough! —SHAKESPEARE WAS BORN HERE! One hint we would hopefully and in good feeling give to the pilgrim who wishes to record his name here—do not mark your name in lamp-black, as with the rough hand of a porter. Walter Scott's name is written very small—imitate him, or *think only*.

How many write upon these walls,
To look upon their own queer scrawls;
Yet surely thought would better speed,
To open SHAKESPEARE!—and to READ.

A book is, however, now kept here, where those who are fond of writing may inscribe their names—*in aid of the fund for the complete purchase of Shakespeare's House* for the use of the public for ever. The property was purchased by the Committee for £3820; yet, notwithstanding the strenuous efforts made to collect subscriptions, £400 yet remain a burden upon the house, and had to be obtained by mortgage.

Between the room in which Shakespeare was born and another bedchamber, now used by the person who keeps the house, is a small ante-room, with a door opening upon some stairs that lead to the beams and rafters of the roof. In childhood we may be sure that roguish Willie would here often wander, roving and playing about among the cross-beams. Those have been touched by no desecrating hand:—look up among them!" surely, *as a boy*—for it is certain that Shakespeare's father lived here many years—the incipient bard has made those blackened beams resound with the buoyant shouts of youthful merriment—he had brothers to play with.

But we must proceed from the cradle of the great bard, and contemplate him in the character of a schoolboy,

"————with his satchel
And shining morning face, creeping like snail
Unwillingly to school."

This will take us to the Grammar School in Chapel-street, not far off, where it is pretty certain he went, or was sent there, unless

"When daisies pied, and violets blue,
And lady-smocks all silver white,
And cuckoo-buds of yellow hue,
Do paint the meadows with delight,"

he ventured on a truant stroll to Shottery, or over the mill bridge by the broad margin of the silvery Avon—not at all unlikely "on occasion."

CHAPEL OF THE GUILD,

AND

GRAMMAR SCHOOL.

"Now go with me and with this holy man
Into the chantry by."—TWELFTH NIGHT.

IN the Chapel-street of Stratford, a square tower of handsome appearance and pointed architecture presents itself to view, which belongs to the *Chapel of the Guild*, or *Holy Trinity*, and in the next adjoining building is the Grammar School, the ground-floor of which was the hall of the ancient guild. Robert de Stratford, in 1269, first founded a hospital and chapel here, with permission of the Bishop of Worcester, and became the first master. The brethren of this guild had a peculiar dress, and each on admission into the hospital made obedience to the master, and took a vow of continence and correct demeanour. The guild obtained letters patent from Henry IV. to retain property, &c., and to form a new fraternity of themselves and their friends to the honour of the Holy Cross and St. John the Baptist, and provide two priests to celebrate divine service within their chapel. In 1482, Thomas Jolyffe, a priest, native of Stratford, and a member of the guild, gave certain lands

and tenements to the guild of the Holy Cross, to maintain "a priest fit and able in knowledge to teach grammar freely to all scholars coming to the school in the said town to him, taking nothing of the scholars for their teaching." Thus was the Grammar School initiated: and at the dissolution, the guild and its appendages fell into the king's hands. But in the seventh year of his reign, Edward VI. granted the whole again to the corporation of Stratford for charitable and public uses. The old Chapel of the Guild founded by Robert de Stratford exists not, and the present chancel appears to be of the age of Henry VI., or perhaps even earlier. The other part of the chapel and tower was certainly rebuilt by Sir Hugh Clopton in the reign of HenryVII. But reverting to the Grammar School as connected with our great bard, Mr. Halliwell says that "Shakespeare was certainly educated at the free-school at Stratford; for even had we no direct evidence to that effect, when we consider his father's position in the corporation during his youth, we should most undoubtedly make the same assertion." *

There can indeed be no doubt about the fact that Shakespeare had his education here: for Rowe states that it was here that he acquired "what Latin he was master of:" but that family circumstances forced him to withdraw from the school before he had made full proficiency.

It appears that the Chapel of the Guild was occupied

* Halliwell, p. 89.

as the school about 1594; and probably Shakespeare may have "conned his task" in the chapel. In one of his plays he describes Malvolio as most villainously cross-gartered, "like a pedant that keeps a school i' the church"—not unlikely to have been one of his own recollections.

The Hall of the ancient Guild occupies the ground-floor of the Grammar School, and the Latin school-room is situate above it, and is nearest the Guild Chapel. This was, until lately, a plain room with a low plaster ceiling, supported by thick beams projecting from the sides of the room. In years that are past here were some old forms and clumsy old desks, worn, cut, notched and marked by the boys of half a dozen generations. One, primitive enough in its construction to have suited the venerable Bede, and perhaps coeval with the foundation of the school, had somehow got to bear the name of Shakespeare's desk: not, indeed, that it was ever likely to have been his *exclusively*, but perhaps some schoolfellow may have remembered his using it when there, or lolling upon it, "as was his custom of an afternoon"—and so it was appropriated to him. It is now kept locked up, but we should have faith in Shakespeare's having at least *seen*—perhaps *kicked it!* The school-rooms have now been repaired, and their antique aspect is gone. In Shakespeare's time they were approached by an antique external staircase, roofed with tile; but this characteristic feature has also passed away.

There is a circumstance connected with the Guildhall

below, which, as possibly tinging the thoughts of the bard's early youth, it is necessary to mention. It was usual in Queen Elizabeth's time when "players of enterludes" came to any town, first to attend on the mayor, inform him what "nobleman's servants" they were, and so get license for their public playing, the mayor, aldermen and council of the city appointed the first play, attending upon it, and paying the actors out of the corporation purse, the audience on that occasion being admitted gratis. The place of performance in Stratford was this Guildhall; and Mr. Halliwell, in his "Life of Shakespeare," says, that when the poet was a boy, "the bailiff and aldermen of Stratford encouraged the exhibition of dramatic performances in their ancient town. The accounts of the chamberlains contain several notices of such performances; but there were no doubt many others not mentioned in these documents." It appears, too, that Shakespeare's father was even then an especial patron of the players. The first companies who exhibited their plays in the hall, according to the corporation records, were so favoured when John Shakespeare was bailiff of Stratford in 1569; and "the Quene's players" received for their services on that occasion the sum of nine pounds. The Earl of Worcester's "players" were at Stratford the same year. Will. Shakespeare was then five years of age; and we can easily *imagine* that the embryo dramatist might have been taken by his father to see the performance. Mr. Halliwell says, that he was "in all likelihood a spectator of the performances." In 1573, Lord Leicester's

players visited the town, and in 1576 when Shakespeare was twelve years of age two companies are mentioned, those of the Earls of Warwick and Worcester, and from thence to 1587 players seem constantly to have visited Stratford. Plays were then very different to the farces and pantomimes of our day, and attended by grave personages such as would go to a scientific lecture now. In fact they were considered vehicles of instruction as well as entertainment, and this Shakespeare himself glances at in Hamlet,

> ——————"I have heard
> That guilty creatures sitting at a play,
> Have by the very cunning of the scene
> Been struck so to the soul that presently
> They have proclaim'd their malefactions."

Mr. Halliwell suggests that probably Shakespeare may have joined some "travelling companies of comedians" for a strolling spree ere he devoted himself to the stage. Such an idea may possibly have *struck* him, and wild spirits have urged less talented men to "strut their little hour," but whether carried out by the bard does not appear, with the exception of *a tradition at Leicester*, that Shakespeare once performed in the Guildhall of that city. It is, however, certain that the Queen's players were in Stratford in 1587, and two years later Shakespeare was himself an humble member of the company. Here his wit, talents, and ready pen soon made him conspicuous amongst them; and that he was fit to reform and dignify the drama, an extract

from his own lecture on the subject in Hamlet fully shows:—

"Let your discretion be your tutor, suit the action to the word, the word to the action; with this special observance, that you o'erstep not the modesty of nature; for anything so overdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first, and now, was, and is, to hold, as 't were, the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure. Now this, overdone, or come tardy off, though it make the unskilful laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve; the censure of which one, must in your allowance, o'erweigh a whole theatre of others."

Such advice as this, with reference to its peculiar subject, is indeed "for all times," and as judicious now as when it was first delivered. Humanity was sometimes in Shakespeare's time "imitated abominably" as he says, and so it has been often since:—"O, reform it altogether."

NEW PLACE,

THE HOME OF SHAKESPEARE.

For convenience sake, as the objects in the town of Stratford necessarily engage first attention, and as they lie in continuity, we shall leave for the present the romance of Shakespeare's love passages, and deferring our visit to Shottery look at the site of New Place, *the home of Shakespeare* when in Stratford, where he finally retired, and where he died. What! *the site only?*—yes, immediately opposite the Guild Chapel, where now within the walls of a garden wave the branches of a lofty tree, is the site of Shakespeare's home, the home that he loved to abide in—broken up, demolished, built upon—utterly degraded.

Shakespeare when still a young man, early in the year 1597, purchased New Place from William Underhill for £60. It was then described as consisting of "one messuage, two barns, and two gardens with their appurtenances." The mansion had been originally built by Sir Hugh Clopton, in the reign of Henry VII., and called "The Great House," and was then doubtless the largest and best house in Stratford. Shakespeare repaired it, beautified and planted the grounds, and

made it the retirement of his fondest joys. He had probably some pride in doing this, for youthful injuries and youthful recollections are never forgotten. Treated contumeliously, as he had been, by the great squire of the vicinity, Sir Thomas Lucy, and doubtless in some degree forced to leave Stratford on persecution connected with the deer-stealing affair, he determined to return as a gentleman, and so in ten years he re-appeared upon the scene as the purchaser of New Place, henceforth to be considered fit for worshipful company. His pride extended further, for in 1596 he caused his father to apply at the Herald's College for *a grant of arms*, on the strength of his mother being a co-heiress of the Ardens, a "family of worship," and accordingly he obtained "a spear of the first, the point upward hedded argent upon a bend sable in a field of gold," as shewn upon his monument, having for his crest a falcon with extended wings supporting a spear. He was now ready for a tilt with Sir Thomas Lucy or any other opponent, but possibly *the sight of the spear*, with its "point upward hedded argent" was enough—at all events it secured the bard in his position as an acknowledged gentleman, and he was not to be gainsayed as a poor player.

Many authors have attempted to picture "the gentle Shakespeare" in his pleasant retirement of New Place, but the truth is that no chronicles exist on the subject, and but very little is known. He might feel himself indeed different to and above the comprehension of the world *in poetical things*, but he had to live and endure,

like the general mass of mankind. But it is unnecessary to rake up minute matters, as some historians have done to show that Shakespeare sold things he did not want, lent money, and wanted again what was fairly due to him. One thing as interesting in his domestic history while possessing New Place, we may allude to. "On June 5th, 1607, Susanna, his eldest daughter was married to Dr. John Hall, and he was most probably present at the nuptial ceremony, as the union met his cordial approval, as may be inferred from the position Mrs. Hall occupied in his will. In the following December, Shakespeare lost his brother Edmund, and before another year had elapsed, his mother, who had lived to witness the success of her eldest son, likewise passed away from this transitory scene. She was buried at Stratford on September 9, 1608, and her eldest son most probably attended the funeral of his mother. Shakespeare himself had then retired from the stage, and three years before his death abandoned London altogether. Here he died on April 23rd, 1616, and was buried in the chancel of Stratford Church only two days afterwards.

The fate of the house remains to be told. Shakespeare left it to his daughter, Mrs. Hall, for her life, and it was inhabited by her and her husband, Dr. Hall, a physician. Here the Dr. died in 1635, and in 1643 his widow entertained Queen Henrietta Maria, wife of Charles I., who had come to Stratford with an army, and remained at New Place three weeks. At Mrs. Hall's death in 1649 the house passed to her only

daughter Elizabeth, then Mrs. Nash, and finally Lady Barnard. After her death the premises were sold and came again into the Clopton family, and Sir H. Clopton, Knight, Barrister, and Herald, new fronted the house as represented in "Wheler's History of Stratford." In 1753, the Rev. F. Gastrell, Vicar of Frodsham, in Cheshire, purchased the property, but being *pestered* with enquiries about Shakespeare and the Mulberry tree in the garden planted by him, he in 1756 ill-naturedly cut it down, the wood being gladly purchased by Mr. Thomas Sharpe, watchmaker, of Stratford, who sold articles made from the "immortal mulberry," as Garrick called it, for a long—a *very long time!* W. O. Hunt, Esq., of Stratford, has a valuable table made from the mulberry wood. At length Gastrell finding Stratford an uncomfortable place, left it and confided New Place to the charge of servants, but the parish still annoying him about rates, he took his revenge by entirely pulling down the house and selling its materials, in 1759.

Thus the site of New Place, which if it had remained in its integral beauty, would perhaps have been the place of most interest in Stratford, as showing what Shakespeare really loved and prided himself in, can now only be glanced at with the most painful feelings. The garden is divided, built upon and cut up, and on a portion of it stands the modern theatre—but not a fragment of Shakespeare's home now remains. An interesting relic exists in Mr. Heritage's garden, below the Grammar School. This is the upper portion of the

old font of the parish church, at which Shakespeare himself and many of his family received holy baptism. As is too often the case, about the middle of the seventeenth century the old font was discarded and a new one! put up. Thus all old associations were *dried up*, and the sacred stone at which so many had been christened, was thrown into the charnel house. Here among skulls and bones it lay neglected and broken till the charnel house was pulled down, when it was kicked into the church yard, and part of it taken by the parish clerk to be used as a watering trough. The late Captain Saunders purchased it of the clerk, and it now stands in the garden of Mr. Heritage, a builder. Such are the transitions we are subjected to in this sublunary scene. Shakespeare had a foreseeing wisdom, he had seen the skulls in the mouldy charnel house, and he had no wish his own bones should get there if his malediction could prevent it. Where would they have been now but for the lines on his grave? And here is the fragment—the broken fragment of the font at which he was presented for the first rite of the church—with all our efforts to preserve memorials of the sons of genius, how futile and vain is the task?—some spoiler, careless, indifferent, or malignant, defeats our hopes; and time himself unsparingly urges his scythe to continual destruction.

——— "The great globe
And all that it inherit must dissolve,
And like the baseless fabric of a vision,
Leave not a rack behind."

To the *works of genius* and to their *imperishable thoughts*, we must look as to the only unfading memorials of them.

The present Bowling Green of the Shakespeare Hotel occupied part of the site of the garden and grounds of the ruined New Place. Its centre is occupied by a fine Mulberry Tree, rich in verdure during the summer, and it is confidently reported that this identical mulberry was produced from a scion of the venerated tree planted by Shakespeare himself, and so lauded by Garrick at the first Jubilee, —

> "Hail to thee
> Blest Mulberry,
> Matchless was he that planted thee,
> And thou like him immortal be."

The bowling green is accessible to every one, and deserves a visit as on the site of New Place, and there are besides several architectural relics of pinnacles, &c. from the church strewed around, inviting thought and observation.

THE TOWN HALL.

THIS stone structure, which meets the eye conspicuously on the same side the High Street as the site of New Place, but higher up the town, is rather connected with Garrick than Shakespeare, but has some pictures within it that deserve notice. On its north side, within a niche, is placed the statue of Shakespeare, which Garrick presented to the Corporation. The poet is represented in the same attitude as on his monument in Westminster Abbey, resting on some volumes placed on a pedestal, where appear the busts of Henry V., Richard III., and Queen Elizabeth. He points to a scroll on which are the following lines taken from the "Midsummer Night's Dream."

> "The Poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,
> Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven,
> And, as imagination bodies forth
> The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
> Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing
> A local habitation and a name."

On the upper border of the plinth are these words—

> "Take him for all in all
> We shall not look upon his like again."

On the plinth is the following inscription—

"THE CORPORATION AND INHABITANTS OF STRATFORD, ASSISTED BY THE MUNIFICENT CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE NOBILITY AND GENTLEMEN OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD, REBUILT THIS EDIFICE IN 1768. THE STATUE OF SHAKESPEARE WAS GIVEN BY DAVID GARRICK, ESQ."

The large room up stairs is sixty feet long, and thirty feet wide, and well fitted for festal occasions. It was in this apartment that the British Roscius presided at a public breakfast at the Jubilee which was got up in the last century, almost entirely by his exertions. At the south end of the room is a whole-length picture of Garrick, in a thoughtful attitude, but in the attire of the day, one arm embracing a bust of Shakespeare. This is well painted by Gainsborough, and the countenance is very good. Immediately opposite is a whole-length painting of Shakespeare in a fancy dress, as if under the influence of inspiration in his study, but the effect is unpleasing, though elaborated. It was painted by Wilson, at the expense of the Corporation, in 1769, the year of the great Jubilee.

There is also a whole-length portrait of the Duke of Dorset, who was Lord of the Manor and High Steward of the Borough in 1769. But this is a mere copy of very mediocre character. On the same side of the room is a full-length painting of Queen Anne, which formerly belonged to the College, and was purchased and placed here at the sale which took place a short time before that building was taken down.

CHURCH OF THE HOLY TRINITY.
Stratford-upon-Avon.
Published by E. Adams.

THE CHURCH,

AND

SHAKESPEARE'S TOMB.

SLOWLY and solemnly we bend our way to the beautiful parish church of Stratford, with its spire rising heavenward from amidst embowering trees, and standing on the sedgy bank of the rippling Avon, where waving willows bend over the glistening stream that bathes the blue eyed *forget-me-not* thickly nestling there. The windows rise above the trees in proud array, and the Norman tower, with its peculiar circular belfry lights, supports the airy spire with a fine effect. Perhaps there are too many trees about the church, and the scene is almost too shadowy, but how calm and secluded, for the gossiping town is left quite behind. Dark clouds curtain round the sacred edifice, and all is momentary gloom, but the sun breaking from the moving clouds, illumines the yellow stone with saintly splendour, and then how glorious it reappears, glittering as a cloud in an amber sunset. The rays gleam upon the transept and mount up the tower, and again the edifice is involved in gloom and stillness.

Stratford Church, dedicated to the Holy Trinity, is a large structure of ancient foundation, the tower evidently exhibiting in its circular windows the Anglo-Norman style of architecture. It was judged by Dugdale to be nearly of the Conqueror's age, but it has been renovated and reconstructed at later and distinct periods. With its nave, transepts, chancel, tower, and spire, it forms a noble whole, while its construction in the yellow oolitic stone, gives it a beautiful and enduring aspect often wanting in more extensive buildings. The windows in the clerestory of the nave, twelve in number on either side, and those of the chancel, rebuilt by Dr. Balshall, warden of the then existing College, in the reign of Edward IV., are very beautiful, and filled with graceful tracery—those in the chancel once glowing with stained glass. The transept is said to have been restored by the executors of Sir Hugh Clopton, in the reign of Henry VII. Originally the spire was of wood and lead, and lower than it is at present, but being decayed, it was taken down in 1763, when the present stone spire was erected. The height of the tower and spire is 163 feet.

A curious thickly arched avenue of lime trees conducts to the entrance of the sacred place, where we pause for a moment in the vaulted porch—for we may not enter with unseemly haste, and the thick door with its lesser portal is evidently not of modern date. As we progress up the nave, we perceive that the hand of discriminating taste has been at work, for its whole interior, and the chancel also, has been recently care-

fully restored, and the carved timber roofs renewed. That of the chancel is exceedingly good, supported by angel figures, and adorned with the emblazoned arms of the various benefactors who subscribed to the work. In the nave, whatever was ugly and inappropriate has been removed, open seats substituted, and a handsome and uniform reading desk and pulpit of carved stone set up.

The nave is divided from the aisles by hexagonal pillars supporting six early-English pointed arches, and above this is the clerestory, forming a continued range of windows, two above each arch, admitting almost an excess of light. The clerestory windows are of much later date than the body of the church, and seem to be of the period of Henry VII., though there is no actual record respecting them. Perhaps Sir Hugh Clopton may have contributed to their erection. His executors are mentioned to have repaired the transepts, but the transepts themselves are of earlier date. The windows of the aisles belong to the fourteenth century, the south aisle being erected by John de Stratford at that period; the north aisle is probably of earlier date.

The chancel or choir is the most remarkable part of the fabric, and from its height and simplicity has a beautiful effect. Five elegantly shaped windows rise to the roof on either side, while above the altar is a lofty east window, once brilliant with stained glass, of which, until recently, a few imperfect and jumbled relics only could be seen. The pristine glory of this noble window is now, however, through the pious ex-

ertions of our estimable vicar, being gradually restored. A receptacle for the offerings of the devotees at the shrine of Shakespeare may be found within the chancel, into which we trust no true pilgrim will fail to cast his mite, and thus assist the worthy man in the accomplishment of his noble object. The timber roof, which, neglected, plastered, and covered up, had fallen into remediless decay, has been now restored, and solemnizes the whole scene, with its characteristic canopy. On either side the old seats or stalls used by the collegiate choir still remain, and the grotesque carvings on the lower part of each seat are very perfect. The altar and reredoss, now renewed, appear within the rails, where glazed tiles cover the floor.

The reparations which at a very considerable expense have been accomplished under the care of an energetic committee, merit the warm approbation of the spectator. The undertaking originated in a suggestion made by Dr. Conolly, at a meeting of the Shakespearean Club, in 1834, and the remains of the Great Bard of Nature now repose in a "solemn temple" that none can thread without awful and exciting sensations, free from that disgust and vexation attendant upon the view of a neglected and dingy edifice.

Thoughtfully pacing up the central aisle of the nave, we stand under the arches supporting the tower, and the chancel with its rich roof and lofty windows opens before our view. There, against the northern wall, is

THE TOMB OF SHAKESPEARE,

and his monumental bust. His undisturbed ashes rest in peace, as he wished them, under the pavement below. We silently approach the hallowed spot, and forgetting for a moment aught else—encaustic pavement, glittering altar, emblazoned arms, sedilia, stalls, and modern tombs—contemplate with thoughtful interest that placid countenance and lofty brow. Supposing the likeness authentic, and it is affirmed that his friends thought it so, we would, if possible, neglect the epitaph and converse with the man. There is the bust representing a man of about fifty, with bald head, trodden bare by thought and excitement, yet apparently gentle in deportment, and humorous, yet melancholy—such is our impression—as if wit was shrouded, ready to break forth from pensive sorrow. May there be truth in this?—The great painter of humanity hath himself said of one of his characters—

> "I have heard my daughter say,
> She hath often dreamed of unhappiness, and waked
> Herself with laughing."

The wittiest have been at times often the saddest, and the wit for which Shakespeare was celebrated may have sometimes broken from a couch of sadness. Who could depict the melancholy Jacques who had not himself felt a touch of melancholy? Yet a line of sensuality appears in the lower part of the countenance, as if its possessor indulged occasionally; and Shakespeare was

traditionally reported as enjoying himself in convivial entertainments with his histrionic friends. Yet, admitting it, intellectuality reigns in that lofty brow, and imagination must have revelled there. We contemplate again, and think of Ben Jonson's lines, a somewhat churlish contemporary, who spoke out what he thought, careless of giving offence.

> "Triumph, my Britain! thou hast ONE to shew
> To whom all scenes of Europe homage owe,
> He was not of an age, but for all time."

That should have been his epitaph, and not the quaint rhymes we here see beneath the bust—but no matter, there they are and must be read. We need not describe the adjuncts to the figure, for they had better have not been there, and the engraved plate sufficiently pictures them. Beneath the cushion upon which the bard is represented as resting his hand, and as about to jot down some rising thought, is inscribed as under:—

> JVDICIO PYLIVM, GENIO SOCRATEM, ARTE MARONEM,
> TERRA TEGIT, POPVLVS MÆRET, OLYMPVS HABET.
>
> STAY, PASSENGER; WHY GOEST THOU BY SO FAST?
> READ, IF THOV CANST, WHOM ENVIOVS DEATH HATH PLAST
> WITHIN THIS MONVMENT: SHAKSPEARE, WITH WHOME
> QVICKE NATVRE DIDE; WHOSE NAME DOTH DECK YS. TOMBE
> FAR MORE THEN COST; SITH ALL YT. HE HATH WRITT
> LEAVES LIVING ART BVT PAGE TO SERVE HIS WITT.
>
> Obiit. Ano. Dio. 1616.
> Etatis 53. Die 23. Ap.

This half-length effigy of Shakespeare was originally painted, as was at that period the usual practice, but it is now white. The colours are thus stated to have appeared at first—The eyes were a light hazel; the hair and beard auburn; the dress a scarlet doublet, slashed on the breast, over which was a loose black gown without sleeves. The upper part of the cushion was crimson, the lower green; the cord which bound it and the tassels gilt. John Ward, grandfather of the Kembles, had the tomb repainted and repaired in 1748, from the profits of his company's performance of Othello, in Stratford. It is perhaps a pity this was ever done, for innovation under the name of decoration having once commenced, Malone, in 1793, felt inclined to try his hand, and so obtained permission to paint the bust white, which probably he had never done, had it remained untainted and untouched. The committee when the recent repairs of the chancel were made, had a desire to restore the bust to its original colour, but from some apprehension the idea has been for the present postponed. The sculptor it appears was Gerard Johnson, a native of Holland, but it is unknown what his materials for the work really were, and it was not executed till some time after Shakespeare's death. Numerous have been the criticisms upon it—more spirited it might have been, but "take it for all in all," we would not do otherwise than rejoice that it is here, and believe that it is as characteristic an image of the great dramatist as it was possible to give. Mr. Fairholt thus states his opinion upon the subject:—"An intent study of this

bust enforces the belief, that all the manifold peculiarities of feature so characteristic of the poet, and which no *chance* could have originated, and no theory account for, must have resulted from its being the transcript of the man; one that has received the confirmation of his own living relatives and friends, the best and only portrait to be now relied on." It looks calmly down upon us, and the hand is about to write—could we but see the written sentence—but it is *only semblance*, nor letter nor writing of the bard, save *his signature*, remains of all he ever penned—we must turn to the *printed pages* of his works, there to wonder and meditate. "WE NE'ER CAN LOOK UPON HIS LIKE AGAIN."

Immediately beneath the monument, receding from the wall, are the gravestones of Shakespeare, his wife, and family, in front of the altar rails, upon the second step leading to it. The first stone is that of Anne (Hathaway) Shakespeare, which has a small brass plate let into it, with this inscription—

HEERE LYETH INTERRED THE BODYE OF ANNE, WIFE OF MR. WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE. WHO DEPTED THIS LIFE THE 6 DAY OF AVGVST, 1623. BEING OF THE AGE OF 67 YEARES.

Vbera, tu mater, tu lac vitamq. dedisti,
Væ mihi; pro tanto munere Saxa dabo!
Quam mallem, amoueat lapidem, bonus Angel' ore'
Exeat ut Christi corpus, imago tua;
Sed nil vota valent, venias cito Christe, resurget,
Clausa licet tumulo mater, et astra petet.

This epitaph expresses the affection of her daughter Susanna, with whom it is believed that she resided at the time of her death.

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Then follows the gravestone of Shakespeare himself, which seems to have been shortened of its original proportions in former repairs of the floor, and on which is the quaint inscription which has saved his grave from desecration.

GOOD FREND FOR JESVS SAKE FORBEARE,
TO DIGG THE DVST ENCLOASED HEARE:
BLESTE BE Y^E MAN Y^T SPARES THES STONES,
AND CVRST BE HE Y^T MOVES MY BONES.

It is scarcely to be supposed that Shakespeare *composed* these grim lines, or even gave directions to have them placed upon his grave, but they doubtless embodied the sentiments that he had been often heard to utter; and considering the general neglect in the conservation of tombs in churches, and especially how often gravestones and graves are disturbed aud broken up, to accommodate more recent corpses, when no friends of the parties dead remain near to prevent it, the pilgrim to the shrine of Shakespeare may well be thankful that such an inscription was in a prophetical spirit selected, even if, as Mr. Knight suggests, it was "the stonemason's invention," to prevent the desecration of his relics. In these careless times pestilence was often abroad, stalking about at mid-day, and if room for graves was wanting, the bones and skulls appertaining to the population of days gone by were with little or no feeling thrown into a damp vault, that existed near most church-yards in towns, called a charnel-house;

and there was anciently one in Stratford church-yard, against the north wall of the chancel. When Ireland visited Stratford, he observed that this charnel-house contained "the greatest assemblage of human bones" that he ever saw. No doubt these were often thoughtlessly knocked about with little ceremony, and the idea of

> ———"a Charnel-house
> O'ercovered quite with dead men's rattling bones,"

was not very pleasing to Shakespeare's imagination, for he has made Hamlet remark, in the scene in "a churchyard," in that overwhelming tragedy—"Did these bones cost no more the breeding but to play at loggats with them?—*mine* ACHE TO THINK ON'T."

Next to Shakespeare's grave-stone is one commemmorating the resting-place of Thomas Nash, who married the daughter of Susanna, the wife of Dr. Hall; the succeeding one is that to the memory of Dr. Hall himself, and then follows the last, that of Susanna the favourite daughter of Shakespeare, (to whom he left all his *real* property,) as shown in the annexed plan of the stones and inscriptions, which must be interesting to all visitors to the tomb. Susanna died July 11th, 1649, having survived her husband Dr. Hall fourteen years.

Over these grave-stones, to save them as much as possible from the wear and tear of treading upon, matting is now placed, which is raised to afford inspection, when required.

It will be only necessary cursorily to allude to the other remarkable or prominent tombs of the church, for here everything sinks into subordination to the interest attaching to the great painter of life and death. On the north of the great east window, is a marble tomb and effigy of John Combe, only thought of now as connected with Shakespeare, and who certainly in his life-time bore a bad odour as a stern money lender, doubtless on good security, and ridiculing whose usurious deeds, some doggerel rhymes are attributed to Shakespeare. Mr. Halliwell has taken up the cudgels to defend Combe, who lived at Stratford College, a mansion since pulled down, and remarks that he left five pounds to Shakespeare, "and that as far as can be judged from his will, nothing is there to be found inconsistent with a character of perfect fairness and liberality." A niggardly fellow might, however, make a very good will, and a man who would not give a poor devil sixpence in his life-time, might, in contemplation of death, leave a hundred pounds to "poor young tradesmen" by his will, as Combe did, though characteristically enough, from him, they were to pay interest for it. Judging by his effigy now remaining, we should not have felt much dependance upon his generosity or "liberality" in a loan transaction!

Within the communion rails, under the north wall, and in front of Combe's monument, is what was once a highly enriched altar tomb, and supposed to be that of Thomas Balshall, D.D., who rebuilt the chancel as it appears at present, and died in 1491. This ornamented

tomb, which appears to have once had figures upon it, in various groups, effigies of saints, and other decorations, has evidently been wilfully defaced. The stalls, or old oak misericords, for the members of the College, thickly covered with paint, yet remain against the walls. Under them are some singular quaint carvings.

With regard to modern monuments, these we leave for the topographer to record; and only glancing at the altar, with its compartments above, and the floor within the rails now entirely covered with highly glazed tiles, the effect at present rather too brilliant, and wanting the dimness of coloured "religious light" to make it quite complete,—we retrace our steps to the nave. The visitor will, however, find a book in the vestry (the southern transept) where he if it so pleaseth him, may record his name for the curiosity of future generations.

At the east end of the north aisle of the nave, was anciently a chapel dedicated to the Virgin Mary,. To the altar was an ascent of three steps, still remaining, but this has been converted into a monumental chapel of the Clopton family, who formerly resided at Clopton, a manor in this parish from which they took their names. Of the tombs here placed together, one is altar-shaped, without figure or inscription, but is presumed to have been raised by Sir Hugh Clopton, the former benefactor of Stratford, and remembered by the long bridge built in his life-time; it so happened, however, that he was buried in London. Against the north wall of the chapel is another altar-tomb sustaining the recumbent figures in white marble of William

Clopton, Esq., and Anne his wife, who died respectively in 1592 and 1596. The husband is represented clothed in armour, his hand reclining on his helmet, his sword and gauntlets lying by his side, and a lion at his feet. Over this tomb are several small figures of their children, with their names. These two monuments may have come under the attention of Shakespeare, as the last must have been erected in his life-time. On the east side of the same chapel is a costly but gaudy monument, representing full-length figures in painted robes, of George Carew, Earl of Totness and Baron Clopton, and Joice his countess, eldest daughter of the above William Clopton. The figures which (with a vain display of pomp which should have "taken physic" ere entering this last retreat of frail humanity) are coroneted, repose beneath an ornamented arch supported by Corinthian pillars gaily adorned with the splendors of heraldic insignia in gold and colours.

Arrived again at the old massive church door, as it opens, if in summer, the cool green avenue of limes at once reminds us of the "lime grove" about the cell of Prospero, though this is an addition long posterior to Shakespeare's day, and we walk under its ample shade to take a passing glance at the gray tombstones of olden date, many of which are time-worn slabs of massive aspect. No inscribed stone dates earlier than the seventeenth century.

Ere we leave the church-yard, its western front and lofty central window, beneath the embattlements and pinnacles on either side, merits attention, and immedi-

ately above the door there still remain entire three spiral-crowned niches, though the images once within them have been long gone. They doubtless once held sculptuies emblematical of the Holy Trinity, to which the church was dedicated.

In connection with the church, it deserves notice that the parish register contains a record that stands like a buoy upon the boundless tide of conjecture, that commentators have so often ruffled and darkened in their vain traverses through the mists of the past. Thus it reads:—

1564.
April 26,
Gulielmus filius Johannes Shakspere.

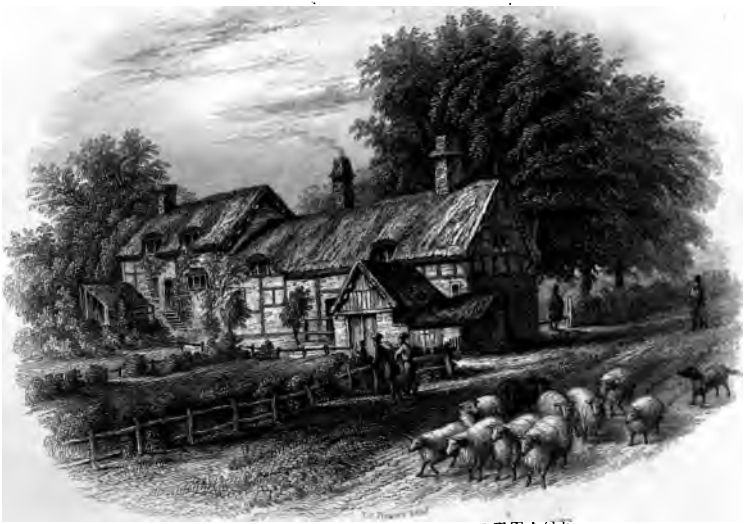
William, son of John Shakspere, baptized the 26th April, 1564. The day of the bard's birth is unproved —tradition gives it as April 23rd, and it was the practice of that time for christenings to take place very soon after birth. Seldom are registers troubled, except some inheritance is involved in the enquiry—and here the world has a life interest in "the brightest heaven of invention" entailed upon mankind for ever. *Births, Marriages, Deaths;* how tersely they include the short romance of life,—

> "Turning the accomplishment of many years,
> Into an hour-glass."

STRATFORD COLLEGE.

To the west of the church-yard, within the wall there apparent, stood till the beginning of the present century a handsome quadrangular building known as the College, and originally appropriated to the Chantry Priests of the Collegiate Church of Stratford, who were first appointed in 1332, but the church does not appear to have been recognised as collegiate before the reign of Henry V., when Ralph de Stratford, Bishop of London, here built a mansion, or college, for the Warden and five endowed Priests. Their revenues, and the persons connected with them, after this much increased, till with other similar establishments they were dissolved by authority of parliament in the 37th year of Henry VIII. Their buildings, however, remained intact, and were granted by Edward VI. to John, Earl of Warwick, afterwards Duke of Northumberland, after whose attainder the site, &c., was leased for a term of years which was completed in 1596, when John Combe, so well known as an usurer, and by his connection with Shakespeare, purchased the same, and here resided. By a strange fatality which has attended most of the buildings which must have met Shakespeare's eye in

Stratford, this, another old English feature whose loss we must regret, was levelled with the ground in 1799 and 1800. Mr. Halliwell, in his life of Shakespeare, has preserved an exterior view of the mansion, and an interior view of the fine old hall as seen in 1785.



ANN HATHAWAY'S COTTAGE.
Shottery Stratford-upon-Avon.
Published by F. Adams.

RURAL

HAUNTS OF SHAKESPEARE

IN THE

VICINITY OF STRATFORD.

SHOTTERY AND LUDDINGTON.

"By heaven, I do love; and it hath taught me to rhyme, and to be melancholy; and here is part of my rhyme, and here my melancholy. Well, she hath one o' my sonnets already; the clown bore it, the fool sent it, and the lady hath it; sweet clown, sweeter fool, sweetest lady."—SHAKESPEARE.—Love's Labour's Lost, Act 4.

In estimating the attachment certainly felt by Shakespeare to Stratford and its vicinity, we are not to consider so much the actual claims of the scenery itself to general regard, as the associations it would present to *Shakespeare's mind* from early recollection and intimate acquaintance with all the bosky glens of the country

around. Shakespeare's mind was brimful of rural and sylvan images, and all the flowers that adorn the vernal and summer English landscape were blowing in his mind, ever ready to beautify the poetical paths he trod; but he wrote for the entertainment and instruction of the world—not the natives of Warwickshire only, and hence he localizes no description—the Avon and Stratford he never mentions. Yet let us gather his notices of natural scenery from any of his plays, we shall find that in general the colours all apply pretty faithfully to what may be seen in the present day in the neighbourhood of Stratford. Witness Ophelia falling into the stream from her willow, hundreds of which tree may be seen in every variety of form and age on the verdant banks of the Avon, and some impending over the river, or actually with broken branches as here described:—

> "There is a willow grows ascaunt the brook,
> That shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream;
> Therewith fantastick garlands did she make
> Of crow-flowers, nettles, daisies, and long-purples,
> That liberal shepherds give a grosser name,
> But our cold maids do dead men's fingers call them.
> There on the pendent boughs her coronet weeds
> Clambering to hang, an envious sliver broke."

Now, all the flowers mentioned above are common vernal flowers, and the "long-purple," or orchis, *(orchis mascula,)* still answers to what Shakespeare has averred respecting it of plain-speaking rustics, and

"cold maids." The crow-flower is the butter-cup, the nettle the white-flowered "dead-nettle" most probably. The "daffodil that comes before the swallow dares," and the other vernal flowers that "paint the meadows with delight" are all of genuine Warwickshire growth, and it would not require much necromancy to find such a spot as the following near the Avon's soft stream, without going to fairy-land for it:—

> "I know a bank whereon the wild thyme grows,
> Where oxlips and the nodding violet blows,
> All over canopied with luscious woodbine,
> With sweet musk roses and with eglantine."

Even the birds that so sweetly sing in our Shakespeare's pages are all of the Warwickshire breed; the bird "with orange-tawney bill," and the "lark that tirra lirra sings," as well as the nightingale, may all be heard any fine morning in May, in the Weir Brake overhanging the Avon in sylvan pomp on the opposite side of the river, below Stratford Church. Shakespeare had the pictures of his youth always before him in his mind, and hence fully to enjoy and understand him, let the pilgrim not merely look on Stratford for a day, but roam about its rural scenes for a week. Mine host of the Red Horse can accommodate him with "Washington Irving's Sceptre" at his pleasure, or the Golden Lion has a mouth ever open to receive him.

We have previously traced Shakespeare from his Birth-place to the Grammar School, and we shall now glance at his career as a lover, and in so doing propose

a pleasant walk of a short mile to Shottery, a rural hamlet in the parish of Stratford, where Anne Hathaway resided, to whom the Bard became affianced at a very early period in his life. As we saunter along the footpath which the future "Immortal" trod, and note the verdant elms and distant Ilmington hills, it may be well to descant a moment on the intervening period. It is admitted on all hands that the Poet remained in Stratford until after his marriage with Miss Hathaway, but what he did or how he was occupied is quite uncertain. We cannot dispel the cloud, and can only mention the suppositions that have been hazarded.

It has been stated by some that he was apprenticed to a butcher; by others that he assisted his father generally in agricultural affairs, and he himself alludes to the tarring of sheep in one of his plays as if he was familiar with the operation.* A Mr. Beeston told Aubrey that Shakespeare had been in his younger years a schoolmaster, (if so, perhaps as an assistant in the Grammar School); and the Bard in various plays

* Perhaps the various statements of Shakespeare's father being a butcher, wool-dealer, glover, &c., are explainable on the suggestion offered by Mr. Knight, that he was in reality "a small landed proprietor and cultivator, employing his labour and capital in various modes which grew out of the occupation of land." In those days it must be remembered that meat was always SALTED for winter consumption, and so on the eve of Christmas a breeder of cattle and sheep must have much slaughtering on his premises, and dispose of whole carcases to his neighbours. The various avocations of old Shakespeare might have required active assistance, wherein likely enough young Willie had to make himself "generally useful."

seems so familiar with the law that we cannot but suspect he was employed at one time in an attorney's office. However this may have been, he got acquainted with the Hathaways at Shottery, and somehow or other, the fair Anne found her way into the excitable Poet's heart when he was only eighteen years of age. There is nothing to wonder at in this but that the bonny maiden herself whose witchery had thus been at work was twenty-six. Their marriage took place in the latter part of 1582, but as there is no record of it in the Stratford register, it must have taken place elsewhere. There is a retired little hamlet called Luddington, in a picturesque spot on the banks of the Avon below its confluence with the Stour, about two miles below Stratford, where a chapel once existed, and it is conjectured that here the marriage took place, for which perhaps there were reasons rendering privacy prudent.

It has been suggested that Shakespeare's union with Anne Hathaway was not a peculiarly happy one. The Poet having then wisdom to learn, not only "*sighed* like furnace" but was quite as hot as one in his love, and hence, notwithstanding the stress that has been laid upon his having "plighted his troth" to Anne Hathaway, it appears pretty clear that the marriage itself was forced upon him rather earlier than he intended. The marriage bond yet remains carefully preserved in the office of the Worcester Registry, and from this it appears that two stout husbandmen of Shottery, Sandels and Richardson, were bondsmen on the occasion; and Mr. Halliwell says that "the bride's father

was most likely present" when they executed the bond, for one of the seals has the initials R. H. upon it. The marriage took place rather obscurely, for no register has ever yet been found in which it appears. In the present day it is generally admitted that there is the fairest chance of happiness when the wife is younger than her husband, and Shakespeare himself if not afterwards complaining in person, has in various passages of his writings inveighed against a material disparity of years between man and wife, especially in the case of the latter being the elder of the two. Thus in his "Twelfth Night" he makes the duke exclaim against the choice of Viola, who disguised as a page, had said she would like one of "*his complexion*" and of "*his years*," he being many years older than the supposed boy :—

> "Too old by heaven! Let still the woman take
> An elder than herself; so wears she to him;
> So sways she level in her husband's heart."

Now it appears from Anne Hathaway's monumental inscription in Stratford church that she was eight years older than her husband. It is further discoverable that all the legitimate children that Shakespeare ever had were born to him ere he left Warwickshire for London, viz. Susanna, born in Stratford, May 1583, and Hamnet and Judith, twin children, born also at Stratford early in 1585, the son dying at Stratford in 1596. Thus before he was twenty-one we find Shakespeare a family man in Stratford, with the attendant liabilities, and as it is

clear from Mr. Halliwell's researches into the history of Shakespeare's father that he was *in debt and difficulty* at this time,* we may rest assured that whatever credence may be given to the deer-stealing story as a still further pressure—that Shakespeare at the early age of twenty-two was driven from Stratford by the self same demons —TROUBLE and ANXIETY, that are still ever afflicting the children of men.

It is remarkable that although our dramatist continued his residence in London up to 1597, when he purchased New Place, no contemporary evidence has ever been produced to show that his family ever resided with him in the metropolis. May we not suggest that *Mrs.* Shakespeare (no longer the gentle Anne) had *her* opinion about players, and *would not go!* At all events we only hear of Shakespeare's annual or occasional visits to Stratford, and therefore, as Halliwell suggests, "the probability may be in favour of his never having relinquished whatever establishment he may have possessed in Stratford, and if so, his association with the drama

* In 1578 John Shakespeare mortgaged the estate of Asbies, that came to him with his wife, for £40; and in 1579 sold other property in Snitterfield. In 1580 he got involved in a Chancery suit about Asbies, which was undetermined in 1597; in 1586 in an action for debt in the bailiff's court, there is a record of a warrant of distress issued against him, with "nothing to distrain upon," as the return to it, and the same year his name was struck off the roll of the corporation! Thus woes cluster about a sinking man—and just at this calamitous time the incipient dramatist disappears from Stratford.—Surely there was more than enough to make him "run his country."

may have commenced almost as early as the date of his marriage with Anne Hathaway."

But we have crossed the fields by the well-frequented footpath to the little hamlet of Shottery. Rural and secluded it once was, with its green lane, picturesque timber-ribbed thatched cottages, babbling rush-fringed brook, and wooden bridge. A recent new house, and abominable *brick-built row* in modern utilitarian style, have some-what disfigured it, and the old timber bridge is exchanged for a worse—that is, artistically. But the scene of the youthful Shakspeare's love-suit, and the residence of the rustic beauty, Anne Hathaway, whose wiles ensnared him, still remain—altered of course in some degree. The house is of timber and brick, in two storeys, with thatched roof, and appears like two joined together, the lowest division being the longest. It is built upon a foundation of squared slabs of lias shale, and is now subdivided into three tenements. Originally it must have been a good farm house of the olden time, fit for the abode of a substantial yeoman, and stands upon a bank, having in front a rudely paved terrace, to which there is an ascent by steps. On looking up at the central chimney, the letters I. H., and date 1697, stand unpleasantly prominent, but only record the reparation of the house and chimney by John Hathaway, at that date. We might have looked with much interest on the old garden of the house had that remained, but it has been perversely rooted up, and the present one is of yesterday. Still the path up to the door Shakspeare *must* have trodden, and lingered perhaps at the gate into

the road, or down the green lane, while a younger daughter (for old Hathaway had many of the breed,)* might run out to say how the *gaffer* was chafing that Anne had not come in to go to bed.—Willie certainly tarried too long at night.

Within the dwelling, divided as it is, the old kitchen yet shows traces of the "good old times," in its rude stone floor, low ceiling, heavy beams, and portions of the oaken wainscot with which its rough plastering was formerly covered. Then there is the wide fire-place, with its cozy chimney corners and supporting beams where the wood fires must have often crackled and blazed on the ample hearth. On the opposite side of the passage is the parlour, also ceiled with strong beams of timber, and with a huge fire-place, with recesses on either side. Initials of the Hathaways, who long continued to reside here, appear on the bacon cupboard on the left of the fire-place, and on an old table, but they are of a later period than Shakespeare's visitations. A "courting-chair" said to have been used by the poet, and large enough for two, used to be shown here; but we strongly opine that old Hathaway had a piece of oak of another description at Mr. Will's service when he showed himself in that quarter, and that the courting was performed "under the green-wood tree."

* Richard Hathaway, father of Anne, died in 1582, but makes no mention of her in his will, although he leaves "sixe poundes thirtene shillings fowr pence," as marriage portions to each of his daughters Agnes, Catherine, and Margarett. Whether Shakspeare had this slender portion or not with the fair Anne is nowhere stated.

The old man makes no mention of Anne in his will, and Shakespeare himself in his never alludes to the Hathaways, so that to say the least of it a coolness had arisen and continued between the families. In the room above the parlour an old carved bedstead of the Elizabethan period is still shown, handed down as an heir-loom with the house, it is stated, and this may probably be the case. There is also an old chest, with some home-spun linen preserved in it, marked E. H.

Taking our course from the Hathaway cottages up the lane, the gurgling brook is seen hastening to hide itself among "vagabond flags," much as it was wont to do of yore, and beyond it are some old structures, thatched and timbered, that may have met Shakspeare's view when sauntering about he waited for Anne's dismissal from the milk-pail. One that now bears the name of "The Shakespeare Tavern," particularly attracts attention, and is a good specimen of the old picturesque timber-framed cottage. In its garden pansies still grow "for thought," if the wanderer likes to look in.

In crossing the fields by the footpath to the left a very remarkable and large WILLOW appears in a damp meadow not far from the National School Rooms. This tree, hitherto unnoticed, might deserve to be *dedicated to Shakespeare*, and we invite attention to it. It is so swollen above its base that a measure of 24 feet is necessary to encompass it, and it must be of considerable age. Unquestionably it is the only tree existing close to Stratford that can by possibility have existed when Shakespeare lived. All others have been remorselessly

felled. Even the "One Elm," the boundary of the Borough on the Birmingham road, and which had been in existence before the Bard's time, and is noticed in a perambulation made the 7th of April 1591, was compelled to bow to Vandal innovation only a few years since, and the act is excused *because* another elm has been planted in its place! Yes!—take *my* coat and give me—a scarecrow's! In the absence, then, of any other tree about Stratford worth looking at, we may examine this, and if we cannot *prove* that it ever sheltered the love-lorn Willie and the buxom Anne, we can only say it seems *old enough to have done so;* and as there is an old spring or well in the field whose sides are built up with stones and evidently of some antiquity, the spot besides shadowed over with hawthorns, it is highly probable that this "hawthorn shade" and willowy glen might not have been unvisited by the loving pair.

While on the subject of rural haunts, we would suggest to the stranger a walk down the river from the old mill foot-bridge, whose stone foundation dates in 1599, to the retired hamlet of Luddington. In the spring-time or summer this is a delicious ramble, and occasional views present themselves well worthy of artistic skill. The lofty wood of the Weir Brake has a charming aspect, and lower down where the little river Stour augments the expanse of the Avon with its slow current, the sedgy islets stalking across the stream, the golden water lilies bathing in the water, the tall flowering rushes, yellow ragworts, and clustered purple spikes of the loosestrife, produce a combination of brilliant yet

harmonious colours. Mounting a rising hill that here overlooks the river, the junction of the streams forms a pretty pastoral scene, while beyond a richly cultivated tract where the wheat begins to brown upon the eye in contrast with the emerald verdure of Avon's meadows, the Meon and Ilmington hills softly tinted in evening hues boldly rise upon the sky. There are several timber-framed houses with thatched roofs at Luddington, leading the imagination on to other days; and at the Weir further on, where the foaming yellow water boldly dashes in musical resonance into the deep woody glen below, the adjuncts of the scene with the little village and church of Weston in the distance, are such as to dwell upon the memory when it looks back in quietude to loved nooks of the past. Higher up, a rough lock formed of massive timber offers in conjunction with the placid water another scene which a Cuyp might delight to sketch and fill in. Beyond meadows, corn-fields, and various copsy masses of foliage, the spire of Stratford Church appears rising finely in the distance. Viewing without hurry these snatches of inland landscape, and marking their beauties in detail, and many exquisite little bits of willow, water, and old ragged trees present themselves along the course of the river, we understand how these homely yet interesting landscape scenes wound their way into Shakespeare's truly English heart, and so he was enabled to describe them, and blend them into "a thousand similes."

That Shakespeare had looked upon the landscape familiarized to his childhood with a keen observant eye

is abundantly manifest, and *whatever country* may be the scene of his play, his pictorial thoughts and rural companions are generally *of true Warwickshire growth.* Especially is this the case with regard to any plants he mentions, which are mostly *vernal ones* obvious to every rustic rambler. Thus, "daisies pied," "violets blue," "lady-smocks," and "cuckoo-buds,"—the latter the lesser celandine, that "paint the meadows with delight," are still beautiful in the vernal time as they ever were, and even "tooth'd briers, sharp furzes, pricking goss, and thorns" are far more likely to enter the frail shins on Warwickshire heaths than in Sicily. So in the "Winter's Tale" Willie turns to his youthful recollections for the flowers that Proserpina let fall, which are daffodils, "violets dim," "pale primroses," and bold oxlips." Thus the spring flowers of England seem to have sweetened Shakespeare's memory, for at every opportunity they give a sweet odour to his thoughts. The grave of Imogen is strewed with the "pale primrose," the "azur'd harebell," and "leaf of eglantine," or sweet briar, all native plants;—so that in tracing the country around Stratford, the rural haunts of Shakespeare in early life, the pilgrim is imbibing the very images of Nature which more or less coloured the scenery of most of his plays.

If eloquence then has been exhausted at the *tomb* of Shakespeare, enjoyment may yet be elicited and inspiration obtained among the scenes on Avon's banks which *his spirit* loved to trace.

Though the river is rather tame near the town, yet at the Weir Brakes and Hatton Rock the banks rise with dignity, boldly prominent in their dense cloak of wood with an embroidery of flowers on their diverging margin. Towards Alveston and Charlecote, the Avon, in the heart of secluded scenery, has all the wildness of aspect it ever had—in some places half filled with tall bullrushes and whispering sedges, hemmed in by straggling bushes, and darkened by hoar impending willows looking into the unruffled stream. Here meditative thoughts rise spontaneously, remembrance is satisfied, and the fount of the bard's power is seen sparkling from Nature's source for

"Did he not moralize this spectacle?"

CHARLECOTE.

"What shall he have that killed the deer?"—As You Like It.

"You have beaten my men, killed my deer, and broken open my lodge."—Merry Wives of Windsor.

Charlecote Park is about three miles from Stratford, beautifully situated upon the green banks of the quiet musing Avon, and at present embosomed in gigantic elms whose leafy canopies surround it on all sides. So thickly placed are these lofty wooded citizens that the old Elizabethan mansion with its turrets, gables, balustrades, and chimneys, is scarcely to be seen from between the foliage unless the house is approached very near.

Charlecote has always been traditionally connected with an early exploit of Shakespeare's, the truth or falsehood of which has engaged the attempts of many writers to elucidate. We accept the tradition, and think it highly probable that Shakespeare in his younger days may have been passionately fond of field sports, and engaged in them clandestinely. Romance and adventure would give to deer-stealing in those days a very different aspect to what it now appears in, and Mr. Halliwell has shown by extracts from various authors of the day, that killing deer, without permission first had and obtained, was an "amusement indulged in by the

youths of Shakespeare's time, and although legally punishable, was regarded by the public as a venial offence, not detrimental to the characters of the persons who committed the depredation."* Probably it was then considered no more of than is thought now of a sportsman shooting a hare on a manor where he is on trespass. From the allusions made by Shakespeare to deer and the hunting of them, it is evident that he was perfectly familiar with the subject, and this knowledge he must have attained when a young man, instigated as all young men are by a love of fun, frolic, and adventure, especially when a set of them meet regularly together, exciting each other by roysterous merriment as they formerly did over the jovial flagon. No man was ever yet wise at all times, much less before he had attained the maturity of years, and young Will. Shakespeare the woodman, was somewhat different to him who came afterwards as a dramatist of established fame to New Place, and purchased the tithes of Stratford.

Sir Thomas Lucy might have been displeased at losing his deer, but who else would care about it, when in after years such exploits enabled the poet from the rich stores of his recollection of deer among parks and forests to indite such lines as these, accurately beautiful, yet so tinged with the pathetic as to assure us that the deer-stealer and subsequent poet must have regretted any cruelties he had ever seen committed, and been in after life one of the most gentle and humane of men.

* Halliwell's Life of Shakespeare, 8vo., p. 121.

"DUKE. Come, shall we go and kill us venison?
And yet it irks me, the poor dappled fools,
Being native burghers of this desert city—
Should, in their own confines, with forked heads
Have their round haunches gor'd.
1st. LORD. ——— Indeed my lord
The melancholy Jaques grieves at that;
And, in that kind, swears you do more usurp
Than doth your brother that hath banish'd you.
To-day, my lord of Amiens and myself,
Did steal behind him, as he lay along
Under an oak, whose antique root peeps out
Upon the brook that brawls along this wood:
To the which place a poor sequestred stag,
That from the hunter's aim had ta'en a hurt,
Did come to languish; and indeed, my lord,
The wretched animal heav'd forth such groans,
That their discharge did stretch his leathern coat
Almost to bursting; and the big round tears
Cours'd one another down his innocent nose,
In piteous chase: and thus the hairy fool,
Much marked of the melancholy Jaques,
Stood on the extremest verge of the swift brook,
Augmenting it with tears."

AS YOU LIKE IT.

Who could have penned such a description as the above, unless in the course of his woodland exploits a similar scene had passed before his own eyes? We should imagine that oft and again Shakespeare and his associates had by moonlight visited the shadowy glades of Charlecote "hunting of the deer," and pierced many a one with their arrows. Perhaps crossing a ford of the sedgy Avon, he has stood "under an oak" in deep

shadow, and thence twanged his arrow on some "hairy fool" too prominent in the moonlight. The *deed is done*, the quarry must be hidden securely—and now *off's the word.**

Forgiving Shakespeare then, as we heartily do, for what doubtless was one of the manners of his age, we turn to Squire Lucy (for he was not then knighted) for *his* opinion of things in general, and this inraid upon property in particular. The Lucys it appears were persons of great influence and power in and near Stratford, but they were frequently engaged in disputes with the Corporation with regard to common of pasture and other matters, and consequently not very popular. Indeed Halliwell mentions a "ryot uppon Master Thomas Lucy, esquire," in which thirty-five inhabitants of Stratford were concerned. If these were prosecuted for the "ryot" we need not wonder at reprisals upon the Charlecote deer. Charlecote House was built by Thomas Lucy, Esq., in 1558, only six years before Shakespeare was born, and he was Sheriff of Warwickshire in 1578, so that he would be in full-blown dignity as "the justice," when Shakespeare incurred his weighty displeasure. He was knighted by Queen Elizabeth, at

* All the writers of the Elizabethan period, observes Mr. Knight, "speak of killing a deer with a sort of jovial sympathy worthy the descendants of Robin Hood. 'This day a stag must die,' was a chorus that probably had often echoed in the hostelries of Stratford in Shakespeare's time; and the penality which was by the 5th Eliz. chap. 21, the defined one of three months' imprisonment, was doubtless laughed at under the inspiring influence of good ale or "cups of sack."

a later period, in 1593. Mr. Knight, in his Biography of Shakespeare, in attempting to prove the improbability of the deer-stealing tradition, desires to "imagine the fine old knight living at his hall in peace and happiness with his family;" and asks whether it is likely that Sir Thomas Lucy would have pursued the son of an alderman of Stratford with extraordinary severity? We think it likely enough that Squire Lucy, sheriff and justice of the peace, would be irritated to prosecute the slayers of his deer *whoever they were*, and if we may safely judge from his portraiture in stone sculptured on his monument at Charlecote, we should be inclined to consider him as proud, self-sufficient, and unrelenting. It is remarkable too, that just about this time the alderman was getting poor, involved in debt, and with *no friends*.

The account given by Rowe, then, really as far as can now be made out, shadows forth the true facts of the case.—"Upon his (Shakespeare's) leaving school, he seems to have given entirely into that way of living which his father proposed to him; and in order to settle in the world after a family manner, he thought fit to marry while he was yet very young. His wife was the daughter of one Hathaway, said to have been a substantial yeoman, in the neighbourhood of Stratford. In this kind of settlement he continued for some time, till an extravagance that he was guilty of, forced him both out of his county and that way of living which he had taken up; and, though it seemed at first to be a blemish upon his good manners, and a misfortune to him, yet it afterwards happily proved the occasion of exerting one of the

greatest geniuses that ever was known in dramatic poetry. He had, by a misfortune common enough to young fellows, fallen into ill company, and amongst them, some that made a frequent practice of deer-stealing, engaged him more than once in robbing a park that belonged to Sir Thomas Lucy, of Charlecote, near Stratford. For this he was prosecuted by that gentleman, as he thought somewhat too severely; and in order to revenge that ill usage, he made a ballad upon him. And though this, probably the first essay of his poetry be lost, yet it is said to have been so very bitter that it redoubled the prosecution against him to that degree, that he was obliged to leave his business and family in Warwickshire for some time, and shelter himself in London."

What the verses really were that gave Sir Thomas Lucy's persecution of Shakespeare such a bitter character will perhaps never be known, but if their irony glanced at all upon the squire's *lady*, as would appear to have been the case according to two stanzas of a song which Mr. Halliwell has quoted as heard by Professor Barnes, in Stratford, in 1690, then Sir Thomas's rancour may be in some degree accounted for. Jokes about *horns* were very rife in Shakespeare's day, as may be noticed in several of his plays, and *horns and deer* are likely enough to have suggested to Shakespeare notions about the *wearing of horns*, not very acceptable to Sir Thomas Lucy's ideas.* Satirists, in their determination to vex

* It is remarkable that Sir Thomas Lucy has penned a long epitaph upon his wife, signed at bottom with his own name, "set down by him that best did know what hath been written to be true;"

and wound, are seldom very nice in their language. Certain it is that Shakespeare entertained in his mind some unpleasant feelings in connection with Sir Thomas Lucy, and he has embodied them with indelible ink in his conception of "Justice Shallow," whose "dozen white luces" magnified from three, probably on purpose, identifies the character with certainty. Perhaps too, the descriptions of a country justice of peace in the second part of Henry IV. are founded upon Shakespeare's recollections of Sir Thomas Lucy. The *luce*, according to Shallow, was a "fresh fish," and so in heraldry a luce signified a full-grown pike. An old author says that "the pike, as he ageth, receiveth diverse names, as from a frie to a gilthed, from a gilthed to a pod, from a pod to a jake, from a jake to a pikerell, from a pikerell to a pike, and last of all to a luce." Three luces* were the arms of the Lucy family. Sir Thomas died in 1600, sixteen years before Shakespeare, and is buried in Charlecote Church, lying side by side with his lady.

The walk from Stratford to Charlecote is very pleasing, especially if the side of the Avon be taken by Hatton Rock, as picturesque a part of the river as any about Stratford. Here all is serenity and repose—the river sleeps, lulled by the "waving sedges," hoar willows

as if some report had been abroad necessary to be put down. The inscription says she was "NEVER DETECTED" in any crime or vice;" and "misliked of none, UNLESS OF THE ENVIOUS."

* Another joke against the Lucys still remembered in traditional rhyme, was from the similarity of sound suggesting their connection with a little animal more troublesome if not so rapacious as the luce or pike.

sentinel the banks, and the wooded glacis rapidly sinking to the stream wild with brush-wood, lofty wild flowers, and drooping brambles, "call home ancient thoughts from banishment," and invest our ideas with the simplicity of scenes fresh with childhood. Shakespeare has been *here*, and we catch the thoughts and similes before embodied by him, and but for him should we now be wandering with his "native wood-notes wild" in our thoughts? *His* enchanter's wand has consecrated all this river and woodland scenery, the soft-flowing Avon, and glades of Charlecote. *With* him we revisit them, nor care ought for them without him. We pass the new church of Hampton Lucy—we pass the new stone bridge over the Avon (there was only a ford formerly,) and still we pass on till we catch a sight among the trees of the old mansion with its bay windows and Elizabethan turrets, and its gate-house of red-brick with octangular turrets on each side, and oriel window over the arched gateway.—All *that* we know was in existence in Shakespeare's time and *met his eye*. This is the circumstance that hallows it in our view, and we ponder and gaze again and again. Numerous herds of deer too, are about, reposing or slowly moving along, increasing the incitement, and making us almost realize the forest scene as of old, when some vagrant archer might be couching in the greenwood shade waiting for a fat buck. And within that mansion is the noble hall with high-coved roof and bright armorial windows, (the three white luces still apparent,) gallery, and wide festal fire-place, where Shakespeare it is said, wild and reckless, confronted the angry squire in the blaze of his

awful authority. We may easily imagine that at least the rampant squire in his pride of place and in the hall of his own creation, feeling he was "under the king in some authority," would not at least be sparing of his *threats* on the occasion against the meek deer-killer, whatever he *really did*, for it appears that the utmost that could at that time fall out against a deer-stealer was imprisonment. Possibly some Dogberry *may* have put on the gyves, and conveyed poor Willie, too fond of wild Nature's love, to prison; or he may only have been *threatened* with the terrors of the law at that particular time; but little dreamed the mighty Justice, that *except for Shakespeare* and his "Shallow" conceptions, he himself, his name and possessions, his luces and his park, would be as little thought of now as the nameless rivulet gliding in obscurity along glens where foot has never trodden. Such is the power of genius to create, such the tenacity of poetical celebrity to retain scenes and things, however carelessly or faintly they may be touched. Charlecote is now wound up in the history of Shakespeare, and nothing can dissever the connection.

So we saunter through the park among the lofty elms, beeches, and limes, and the scene is involved in shadow consonant with the feelings likely to arise, save where on the velvet turf the opening glades exhibit the numerous deer with their branching horns, which we can by no means dispense with, leading us to the images of the witty poet, and his mention of the "hairy fools." Yet changes have occurred even here, we look for trees that could with certainty be considered coeval with the Elizabethan age, and find but few—some there are, and

perhaps the old hawthorns divided down to their roots in many boles are really as old as the time of Shakespeare's excursions hither. They inspire recollections of that "hawthorn shade," so old English in itself, to which he often refers.

The old church of Charlecote has recently been taken down, and another in the pointed style erected in its place.

Thus change progresses, and it becomes increasingly difficult for imagination to supply the images of the past. The old mansion has even been altered and added to, but may its characteristic features long remain.

We have thus exhibited Stratford and portions of its vicinity, in their connection with Shakespeare, because his reign over the human heart is and ever will be universal. *His* is the talisman, and the pilgrim journeys hither to commune with time past, and trace the *mind of the poet* entwined with the scenery he loved. This in its rural features—the soft-flowing Avon, fair flowers, and woodland beauties, can yet in a considerable degree be traced; and the munificence of the Shakespearean subscribers in renovating the church at an expense of near £10,000, has secured that "solemn temple" where undisturbed the ashes of our great bard repose, we trust as was his wish, never to be disturbed. THE BIRTH-PLACE is now quite unincumbered, and safe from the mutilation of chance or caprice: and Stratford will therefore ever be a beacon towards which the aspirations of the poetical enthusiast will point.

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